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*A Coptic Ostrakon.* — By Professor WILLIAM H. WORRELL,  
Hartford, Conn.

The curious ostrakon here presented was bought in 1909 by Professor Walter Dennison from the well known dealer in Gizeh, the Shêch Ali al-Arabi (who as usual gave no information of its origin), and was kindly placed at my disposal.

Text

† ⲱⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲥⲁ ⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲃⲟⲟⲩⲛⲉ  
ⲛⲃⲏⲛⲉ ⲥⲓⲧⲛ ⲁⲙⲙⲁⲕ[ⲟ]ⲓⲣⲓ ⲛⲙⲁ  
ⲛⲃⲁⲙⲟⲩⲗ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲥⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲣⲧⲟⲩ  
ⲥⲓⲱⲱⲩ ⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲙⲁⲛⲃⲓⲗ ⲛⲉ  
+ ⲁⲑ/ ⲓⲗ · ⲓⲛⲗ/ +

Translation

[Ansate cross] Demand ten sacks  
of dates from Ammakouri the  
camel-driver. He has twenty artabs,  
being those of the place of Bij.  
+ Ath[or] 14th, [of the current] ind[iction the  
year] +

The language is Sahidic with certain northern tendencies, e. g.: ⲃⲏⲛⲉ for ⲃⲛⲛⲉ, ⲁⲑⲱⲣ for ⲥⲁⲧⲱⲣ. The sixth letter of the first line is plainly ⲉ but must have been intended for ⲥ. The eleventh and twelfth of the second line though crowded are ⲙⲙ. The fifteenth of the second line may have been an ⲁ similar to the ⲁ just preceding and to the ⲗ of the ⲓⲗ in the last line. Yet the space and the visible remains suggest far more strongly ⲟⲩ. Either would be a possible reading. We have here either a Copt or an Arab with the Arabic familiar name المكارى Al-Mukâri, "the Camel-driver". The

Coptic writer either consciously or unconsciously translates this by ΠΜΑΝΘΑΜΟΥΛ, and renders it phonetically by ΑΜΜΑ-ΚΟΥΡΡΙ. It was probably the only name by which he was to be designated. Such metatheses are common in vulgar Egyptian Arabic today. For the kunya المكارى see Al 'Asyûti, *Lubbu l-Lubâb*, edition Veth, page rcr. But the assimilation of the l of the article is Coptic and rare at that, for the Arabic article with following m is regularly given in Coptic as αλμ.

The name Pemanbij, or the place of Bij, is difficult. The tempting identification with the name of the now ruined city of Mambij (Mabog, Bambyke) in extreme northern Syria, north-east of Aleppo, must be rejected. Ripe dates are not produced on the coast today further north than about Jaffa; and palms cease to grow north of Haifa. In Mesopotamia the northern limit of the date-palm is fixed by Baedeker, *Palästina und Syrien*, 1910, p. 395, between Sâmarrâ and Bagdad. Egypt, the land of dates, would not have imported such from southern Mesopotamia by way of Mambij. On the other hand, I find no record of any Egyptian locality of that name; and ΒΙΧ is found in Peyron's *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 28, following Kircher's very doubtful authority, to be the Arabic فَيْس "tessera", "pupilla", "joint", "gem". As it is written in larger letters than the rest of the line it must be a proper name.<sup>1</sup>

The year of the current indiction is not given. Perhaps the purposes of the memorandum made this unnecessary, and the writer added ἸΝΔ from habit. Possibly the numeral | 10 is intended by the + at the end.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Professor Torrey for the suggested identification of the word with البَيْحَة mentioned by al Belâdhuri 238 f. [ed. Cairo 1319, p. 247 f.; cf. Maqrîzi ed. Cairo 1324, vol. i, p. 313 f.]. The name was, and perhaps still is applied [Baedeker, *Egypt and the Sudân*, 1908, p. xxxviii, Beja], to a nomadic people east of the Nile, between Qena and Quşêr on the north and the Abyssinian mountains on the south. The famous revolt of this people in 854 A. D. is recorded by Stanley Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, p. 41. The country about Aswân at least is famous for its dates. In Coptic this people is called ΒΑΑΝΕΛΛΟΥΟΤΙ.

41NENCA 311TENBOON  
NBHNEZITNAWOKWIMWA  
NBANXEPHXONWETBY  
HAWYFEDWIBIXNE  
TATZ/ND